

# Notes from the Inter-Agency Coordinating Team February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2001 Meeting

## Participants:

John Witteman	BHP
Derek Chubb	BHP
Tamara Hamilton	DIAND Environment & Conservation
Eric Yaxley	DIAND Environment & Conservation
Marc Lange	Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO)
Anne Wilson	Environment Canada
Laurie Bruno	Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board (MVLWB)
Greg Smith	Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board (MVLWB)
Robin Staples	Independent Environmental Monitoring Agency (Agency)

Meeting began at 1:15

## Round Table Updates:

Tamara began the meeting by introducing Eric Yaxley, who is the DIAND representative responsible for the Diavik file.

Eric discussed the development of the Diavik Monitoring Advisory Board and noted that the next meeting for the implementation group will be on Tuesday February 27<sup>th</sup>. Eric then initiated a discussion on the Inter-Agency Coordinating Team (IACT) meetings and was interested in hearing from IACT members on role and success of IACT.

The group agreed that IACT meetings help maintain clear communication lines between IACT members and provide an effective setting to share information & concerns.

There was also general discussion on the length of time the Diavik technical committee for the MVLWB will remain in place.

Marc noted that he is currently reviewing the information package he received from BHP on the Carrie and Desperation water bodies. He predicted that BHP should expect a response in one to two weeks.

John noted that out of the recent environmental workshops, a workplan for 2001 will be developed and be going out for tender shortly to a select number of consultants. John also mentioned that a couple of groups (i.e. the Agency & Environment Canada) noted during the workshops that they would like more discussion on reclamation and the snow survey. John noted that if there is a desire for these topics or others to be discussed at next years workshops then BHP would like more notice so that time can be scheduled to discuss them.

In addition, John noted that the Wildlife Effects Monitoring Program CDs have been finished and are being distributed. He is also currently working on BHP's annual report

and noted that it will follow the same format as last year (i.e. address requirements of both the Environmental Agreement & Water licence together). The report will be completed by March 31.

Mention was also made of the ongoing review of dissolved oxygen in arctic lakes, which BHP is commissioning. John noted that significantly different levels of dissolved oxygen have been observed in a number of lakes at the mine site, one of these, Cujo, where baseline information is being collected. After the existing data are reviewed and an extensive literature search is completed a paper will be prepared by Dr. Buster Welch, a leading arctic limnologist. John indicated that this paper would likely be finished before the summer.

Derek noted that the Fox amendment package has been distributed and that he is available to discuss any concerns or questions. Derek also mentioned that the Mackenzie Valley Impact Review Board (MVEIRB) has provided the report of Environmental Assessment for the Sable, Pigeon & Beartooth pipe development to BHP and the preliminary screeners. The MVEIRB recommended that the minister of DIAND approve the proposed development subject to a number of measures and conditions. Derek noted that he has met with Laurie to discuss the regulatory process following Ministerial approval.

Anne mentioned that she has been reviewing the report of the Environmental Assessment for the Sable, Pigeon, & Beartooth pipe development. Anne also noted that Environment Canada staff would be visiting the mine site soon for benthic sampling at Long Lake, which is part of the ongoing research on the facility. In addition, Anne expressed that a summary of decisions from the recent environmental workshops would be helpful.

John noted that a summary of decisions arising from the environmental workshops would be supplied in the first week in March.

Laurie began her update by introducing Greg Smith, a fellow regulatory officer at the MVLWB, who will assist Laurie with the BHP file. Laurie noted that Derek Chubb had indicated to her that he would be submitting the Type B water licence application for the stream crossing and the necessary land use permits for the Sable, Pigeon & Beartooth project before the Minister signs off on the MVEIRB's Environmental Assessment report in order to streamline the regulatory process as much as possible. Laurie also mentioned that she would be distributing the Panda Waste Rock Storage Area Beartooth – Bearclaw Drainage 2000 Seepage and Waste Rock Survey report shortly. She noted that the low pH levels that were noted in a couple of the seeps in the report would be looked into further. She is also looking into whether the MVLWB needs to approve the land treatment process proposed for Misery.

As Darren Unrau, the DIAND inspector, was not able to attend the meeting, Laurie reviewed an email from Darren outlining a number of issues that were raised in the most recent inspection report of the mine. It was noted that the discharge of Misery Lake water to King Pond has ceased until a revised report for King Pond is submitted and it is determined that the treatment plant can operate efficiently. The water quality in King

Pond also needs to be verified and monitored in preparation for decanting. As well, the Inspector requires additional engineering information on the King Pond Dam.

**John** responded by noting that BHP will be constructing the King Pond Dam this year and that all the necessary information will be provided before construction begins. In addition, John mentioned that BHP has received the land treatment information package from their consultants (EBA) regarding Misery and that it is currently being reviewed in house. John also noted that a communications protocol is required on sending materials to the MVLWB and others and he would like a board decision on this to establish a clear communications policy.

**Robin** began by passing on Zabey's apologies for not being able to attend the meeting. He noted that the Agency is currently in the process of preparing a response to the Monitoring reports and recent Workshops and will have this sent to BHP and copied to the other IACT members in the near future. In addition, the Agency is in the early stages of preparing this year's annual report and will be incorporating the comments that were received from the federal departments. Comments were never received from GNWT or BHP. Robin also noted that the Agency's increased communications efforts have resulted in an invitation to meet with the Lutsel K'e Lands and Environment Committee in March. The Agency is also currently reviewing the Environmental Assessment Report, the Fox amendment and the 2000 Seepage and Waste Rock Survey report. In addition, the Agency resource library is continuing to undergo extensive remodeling to make it more usable and up to date. Robin also passed on that the Agency is pleased with the budget negotiations with BHP this year.

Robin then asked BHP personnel when the Agency might expect a response to the information request on wildlife monitoring data that was submitted on February 14<sup>th</sup>, and if BHP will be carrying out any environmental management changes in response to RWED's letter regarding carnivore problems.

**John** responded by noting that he has not yet seen the information request. In respect to RWED's letter, BHP will be placing skirting around all the buildings and using electrical fence around the camp at Misery.

**Tamara** noted that she has sent the draft reclamation guidelines to the Agency as requested. She also noted that this reclamation policy would be finalized shortly and that she would email the review process out to those who are interested. Tamara also noted that the Minister's response to the Environmental Assessment report from the MVEIRB could be expected around March 30<sup>th</sup>. In addition, Tamara noted that John Brodie has been contracted by DIAND to review the reclaim model proposed by BHP. At this time, he will only be carrying out phase one of the review and is not intending to visit the mine site.

*Next meeting will be at the Agency's Boardroom at 1:15pm on April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2001.*

**Meeting finished at 2:00pm**